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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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Memorandum of Conversation

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SUBJECT:

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
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PARTICIPANTS: Ambassador George Wadsworth, American Ambassador to Turkey;

General Arnold;

Mr. William O. Baxter, ~~XCOPIESXTOXX~~ First Secretary of the American Embassy at Ankara;

John H. Ferguson.

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My discussions in Turkey, prior to General Bradley's arrival, extended over two days. The sequence of these conversations has been rearranged in this memorandum for the sake of clarity.

In my first discussion with the Ambassador, he was principally concerned with the situation in Egypt. He had received word on Sunday afternoon from the Prime Minister that the Turks were agreeable to supporting an approach to Egypt and had immediately wired this information to Cairo. He had just seen a telegram from Mr. Caffery indicating that this message had not arrived until forty-eight hours later. He could not understand this matter, since he had been told by his code clerk that the code clerk in Cairo had indicated on Sunday night that the message had been received. (I learned later in Cairo that the message had in fact not been received for forty-eight hours, but I also learned that none of the four Ambassadors in Cairo felt that the situation would have been altered in any way had the proposals been delivered on Monday, October 8; they all felt that the Egyptians had by then made up their minds to go ahead and would not have been stopped by the presentation of the proposals).

In talking

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In talking to Ambassador Wadsworth about Turkey, he was most emphatic about the desire of the Turks for an association in all parts of NATO, including the Eisenhower command. He was disturbed that General Bradley might arrive and wish to talk about the Middle East before the Turkish NATO relationship had been satisfactorily cleared up. I referred to the fact that when the Bradley mission had first been contemplated it was thought that General Bradley and his British and French colleagues would go to Turkey for the purpose of securing Turkish agreement to an approach to Egypt. This mission had ceased to be relevant, since the three Ambassadors in Ankara had already secured Turkish agreement on this point. I said that this might have the effect of complicating the discussions in Turkey, since I did not know to what extent General Bradley would be prepared to discuss with the Turks the details of the NATO aspect of the matter.

Mr. Baxter was also of the opinion that the Turks would probably not agree to participation in the Middle East command until they had secured assurances of a NATO command relationship which they considered satisfactory.

In my discussions with the Ambassador, he made three principal points:

1. That the Turks expected the conversations with the three Generals to be concerned principally with NATO; they considered that the matter of supporting the "idea" of a Middle East command had already been dealt with by their agreement for an approach to Egypt. If General Bradley did not discuss NATO first he would certainly make no progress with respect to the Middle East command arrangements.

2. The Turks would want to know from the Generals what new tasks they would be expected to undertake as a result of their NATO membership. They consider Turkey as Eisenhower's right flank and they think of possible new tasks in terms of (a) holding the Straits or (b) if attacked in the East, falling back to a line that would protect more of the Middle East than merely Turkey alone. Their whole task to date has been to prepare a defense in Turkey and to hold a foothold for re-entry there.

3. The Turks

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3. The Turks will be interested in the commitments to them from NATO and from them to NATO. This will involve such matters as belligerency in the event of trouble anywhere in the NATO area, logistic support from Carney with respect to sea and air and agreement with respect to the use of Turkish air fields for returning bombers, etc.

General Arnold was equally as emphatic as the Ambassador and Mr. Baxter, and thought that it would be impossible to discuss a Middle East command with the Turks until after satisfactory discussions on the Turkish relation to NATO had been held. He was also emphatic that General Bradley should not mention at this time the idea of a British Middle East Commander. I told him that the Standing Group paper had made the appointment of a British Commander explicit and that we had agreed to support such a proposal. I also told him that we had insisted that the Standing Group suggestion could not be considered a condition of Turkish membership in NATO and that it could not be considered in any sense final until after discussions with the Turks. General Arnold felt that the only way the Turks would be willing to cooperate in the Middle East would be as a NATO member, just as was the case with the United States, except that the Turks would provide ground forces to the Middle East command if we would equip them. General Arnold said that he was sure that he could find supplies for six additional divisions but that money was the problem.

General Arnold said that in all of his talks with the Turkish military it was clear that the Turks did not consider that by the creation of a Middle East Command any new strength was being added to the Middle East. General Arnold thought the chart of the NATO and Middle East Commands which had been prepared by the Standing Group was very unsatisfactory to the Turks and was worried about its use. General Arnold and the Ambassador had been in some doubt as to what was contemplated with respect to the role of the NATO Standing Group with respect to Turkey, and I explained that the Supreme Allied Middle East Commander would be guided solely by the NATO Standing Group in respect to Turkey. Both General Arnold and the Ambassador thought it helpful that this principle was clear. General Arnold referred to the fact that as a result of the situation in Iran and now in Egypt the British position seemed very bad to the Turks and that the Turkish military did not consider

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that any significant British strength existed in the Middle East. The Turks, he said, were very realistic and were not fooled by a mere reiteration of British responsibility in the area. He also referred to Turkish worries about the future of their present military assistance program if such aid was to be channeled through a British Middle East Commander. He said that it would be necessary to assure the Turks that we would continue to be responsible for the aid program and he also emphasized the point the Ambassador had made with respect to the desirability of some assurance that we (through Carney presumably) would continue to supply the Turks if trouble broke out. I said that I believed there had been some discussion about the use of the 6th Fleet and Carney's other forces in support of Turkey in event of trouble, but that I did not know how much General Bradley would be able to say about this.

General Arnold told me that he had been concerned that the Turks would "blow up" if the discussions were conducted principally on the subject of the Middle East Command, and he had suggested that instead of making an issue about points that might be raised the Turks should agree to consider any proposals the three Generals put forward. He said the Turkish Chief of Staff had agreed to this, and that in fact he was sure the Turks had already made up their minds that if we pressed the Middle East Command at this time, prior to the formal admission of Turkey to membership and the establishment of satisfactory NATO relationships, they would be polite but not give any decisions at this time.

Both General Arnold and the Ambassador felt that it was too bad General Bradley's visit was occurring now rather than later, since the Turks had gone as far as they were prepared to go for the present when they agreed in general to the necessity of Middle East defense arrangements and the propriety of an approach to Egypt. I said that in the Standing Group suggestions, as I understood them, there was provision for Turkish representation at Eisenhower's and Carney's headquarters, at least for liaison and planning purposes and that it had been hoped that this degree of relationship would be satisfactory to the Turks and they would therefore be willing to discuss in some detail their more active participation in a Middle East Command. I pointed out that our participation in the Middle East Command had been considered an element which should attract Turkish

adherence.

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adherence. Neither the Ambassador nor General Arnold felt that a mere planning and liaison relationship with Eisenhower's command would be satisfactory to the Turks. The Ambassador stressed that Turkey thought of itself as Eisenhower's right flank and a bastion for the defense of the Middle East but not as a part of the Middle East. He also referred to the fact that the Turks had received considerable criticism from the other Arab States for supporting the U.S., U.K. and French on the Egyptian approach and were being called "tools" of the Western imperialists. He said, however, that this would not affect Turkish willingness to continue to cooperate with us provided the Turks received appropriate assurances of our continued military aid and satisfactory relationships with Eisenhower's command.

S/P:JHFerguson:nrs

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